(b) The details of progress made in Uttar Pradesh in afforestation are given below:—

Year	No. of seedlings planted (In lakhs)
1985-86	3,548·0
1986-87 (upto 12/86)	4,864·0

Statement

1. The State Governments have been asked to avoid clearfelling of the natural forests for raising plantations as far as possible. Where such fellings are unavoidable due to restoration of crop, or other silvicultural considerations, it should be restricted to areas not exceeding 10 ha on the hills and 25 ha in the plains and in no case good natural forests should be clearfelled.

2. Raising of mixed species of indigenous origin should be preferred to monoculture. Indigenous species should receive preference over exotics.

3. While making the choice of species, consideration should be given to the preference of the local population.

4. The State Governments/Union Territories have been requested to identify wastelands in their territories.

5. People's involvement should be ensured through decentralised nurseries.

6. The voluntary agencies, Mahila Mandals Youth groups should also be motivated in nursery raising and tree plantations.

7. Strips of land along roads, rail, canals, etc., and other degraded land should be given to the rural poor, with usufruct rights on the trees planted by them on such lands.

Killing of elephants

723. SHRI DINKARRAO GOVINDRAO PATIL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that nearly 200 elephants have reportedly been killed during the last three months for their ivory tusks; if so, the details thereof; and

(b) what steps have been taken to check poaching of elephants?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): (a) Government are not aware of any such large-scale killing.

(b) The following steps have been taken to check poaching of elephants:—

(i) Coordination between chief wildlife wardens of contiguous States is being effected by regular meetings and exchange of information of movements of elephants and incidents of poaching. The Regional Deputy Directors of the Central Government are assisting in this cooperation.

(ii) Police of the concerned state are extending help and cooperation to control the poaching.

(iii) The existing staff engaged in anti-poaching activities is being strengthened. For this purpose, tribal trackers have been engaged where necessary.

(iv) Improvement in the communication system with the help of telephones and wireless network is being collected in the concerned States.

(v) To assist the States in their efforts to control poaching and

illegal trade in wild life, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme has been initiated. This scheme provides for equal sharing of the non-recurring cost between the Central and State Government. Rs. 3.00 crores is the VII Plan outlay under this Scheme.

(vi) Patrol guards are being suitably armed and deployed.

(vii) The Central Wildlife Division is being strengthened.

(viii) The Wild life (Protection) Amendment Act, 1986 has laid down that dealers in imported ivory for trade and manufacture will also require a licence. No such licences will be given for Indian ivory.

(ix) Import and re-export of articles made from ivory of African origin is regulated as per the provisions of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

News-item captioned "Presidents' Medal for Controversial U.P. Official"

724. SHRI DINKARRAO GOVINDRAO PATIL: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news-item which appeared in the "Times of India" of the 13th December, 1986 captioned "President's Medal for controversial U.P. Official" if so, what are the details thereof?

(b) whether any inquiry has been ordered in this regard; and

(c) if so, what is the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c) The Police Medal for meritorious service was awarded on the occasion of Republic Day, 1984, after the Government of U.P. had certified the integrity of Shri Lakshmi Saroop Saxena and had also certified that no inquiry was pending against him.

The Government has seen the news-item. As the matter primarily concerns the Government of U.P., it has been brought to their notice for appropriate action.

EPF Investment Policy

725. SHRI DINKARRAO GOVINDRAO PATIL: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy has suggested to Government to revise Employees' Provident Fund investment policy so that subscribers may derive benefit of the high interest rates;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what action Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The National Institute of Public Finance and Policy have in their report on appraisal of provident fund and allied schemes recommended *inter-alia* that the existing pattern of investment for the provident fund may be revised and the organisation may be permitted to invest